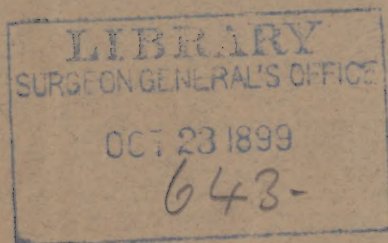


NEIDHARD (C.)

HOMCEOPATHY IN EUROPE, 1878.

GERM THEORIES OF DISEASE.



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BY C. NEIDHARD, M.D.

(Read before the Homœopathic Medical Society of the County of Philadelphia.)

SOME of my colleagues have expressed a wish that I should furnish them an account of the present state of Homœopathy and medical science in Europe, gleaned during my last summer's tour.

My main object in visiting Europe was, however, less the investigation of medical science, than to obtain that mental and physical rest so necessary to the physician, after an exhaustive medical practice of many years.

My colleagues will please bear this in mind, if my report appears to them rather meager.

In the first place, I must make the general observation that Homœopathy, as a distinct medical doctrine, has not advanced to the same extent in conservative Europe as it has done in this country. On the other hand, the homœopathic practice has to a greater or less degree modified the practice of all physicians who do not bear the distinctive name of Homœopaths.

Many druggists in various towns have homœopathic pharmacies attached to their officines, where these physicians send homœopathic prescriptions.

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The want of a Homœopathic university, where students could acquire the necessary knowledge, is universally felt. It is true that in several European universities, like those of Paris, London, Munich, Jena, Heidelberg and Zurich, there are professors advocating the homœopathic doctrine; but the homœopathic *Materia Medica* and practice are not laid down in the regular curriculum of their studies, but can only be privately acquired.

In Antwerp, Brussels, Cologne, Frankfurt-on-the-Main and Heidelberg, I found homœopathic physicians in large practice. In fact, from what I could gather, it seemed to me they were more sought by the people than the practitioners of the old school. In some instances they were perfectly overwhelmed with patients. These were all physicians bearing the distinctive name of Homœopathist. But their number was generally too small to satisfy the wants of the public. Another class of physicians, more or less imbued with homœopathic views, had also their clientèle, but were certainly less consulted than the others, unless they were distinguished by some devotion to a special order of diseases. In their case there was the practical recognition of the truth of the homœopathic law, but not that hearty acknowledgment of it which we have adopted in the United States.

I do not speak of the question of doses, or the occasional use of palliatives, or other measures in incurable cases, but the affirmation of the absolute truth of this law.

In my conversation with allopathic professors in Europe I became firmly convinced that there is no possibility of progress in the prevailing practice of medicine without the acknowledgment of the law of cure. The application of their remedies is based upon no law whatever; even the possibility of such a law is scouted. What remains then? The most outspoken empiricism in the application of remedies.

Of the truth of this assertion anyone can satisfy himself by examining some of the latest treatises on allopathic practice. There are no definite indications for the employment of the remedies, but only speculative notions. Their chief reliance is upon palliatives, or pain-assuaging treatment.

In Munich I found the veteran of Homœopathy, Professor Buchner, of the University, still active, and attending a large circle of patients. Besides him, there are in Munich, Drs. Kolk, Reisser, Mahir, Aub, Herold, Quaglio, Trettenbacher, and three others.

In Nuremberg there are Drs. Gross, Eberle, Maler and German.

In Augsburg and Landeshut there are also three or four representatives of Homœopathy.

It will be seen that there is an increase of homœopathic practitioners since my last visit, ten years ago.

In Vienna the Sexhaus Hospital is in a flourishing condition. It has now four hundred beds and fifty Sisters of Charity to take care of the sick. The three other homœopathic hospitals are also well patronized.

A new homœopathic hospital has been erected at Baden, a somewhat celebrated watering place near Vienna, containing ten thousand inhabitants. This hospital has from fifty to sixty beds, and is under the care of Dr. Landesmann. A homœopathic hospital, containing beds for thirty-eight children, has also been erected, within a year, at Liniengasse No. 19. The founder is Dr. Tauber von Lebenswarth (knight), who made a contribution of eighty thousand florins for this purpose.

As far as I could ascertain the ultra Hahnemannian views have few defenders in Germany. A liberal interpretation of the homœopathic doctrines prevails everywhere. The German mind could not be content with a mere symptomatic treatment. Many of their profound thinkers have of late devoted themselves to the study of the doctrine of the germs, and great advances have been made in the investigation of these ideas.

In Leipzig I saluted Hahnemann's statue on the promenade. Leipzig makes a favorable impression. I was unfortunate in my visit, as many physicians had left the city during the summer.

What I said about the progress of Homœopathy in Germany, holds good with regard to its advance in England.

Although the name of Homœopathist may not be so common as it is in America, the science, in a modified form, has penetrated all classes of physicians, who have adopted our views and use our remedies. There is still a stigma attached to the name of Homœopathist, and many physicians have not the moral courage to be ostracised by the profession.

In the meantime Dr. Hughes and others give regular lectures at the Homœopathic School connected with the Ormond Street Homœopathic Hospital. They are frequented by many students and physicians, mostly qualified practitioners.

Dr. Kidd, who, according to Dr. Dudgeon, has about the largest homœopathic practice in London, was called to Berlin, during the sitting of the Congress, to attend Lord Beaconsfield. The *Lancet*, in publishing the account of the visit, makes it out that Dr. Kidd is not a homœopathic physician, but one of "our own men." Dr. Kidd, however, published a popular treatise on Homœopathy, in which he avows himself a full believer in the homœopathic practice and doctrine, having more faith, however, in Hahnemann's doctrine as originally proclaimed by him, than in his later views and those of some of his disciples.

The great endeavor of homœopathic physicians of London is at present to increase the number of beds in their hospital, in order to entitle them to establish a regular homœopathic school in connection with it.

Dr. Drysdale, of Liverpool, whom I visited on the first of October, gives an account of the progress of Homœopathy similar to that of the other homœopathic physicians. Not possessing a homœopathic institution, the students are obliged to attend the lectures of the old colleges. Dr. Ringer, Professor of Materia Medica, in the University of London, mentions in his lecture most of the homœopathic remedies and their mode of application, without giving credit to the source from which he derived his knowledge.

As soon as the charter for the Homœopathic school is obtained, the homœopathic students will attend the lectures there.

According to Dr. Drysdale, the future of medicine lies in the study of the theory of germs, on which subject he has of late

published an excellent pamphlet. There are about 13 nominal homœopathic physicians in Liverpool; when I was there ten years ago, there were only five, but all physicians, as Dr. Pope, delegate of the British Homœopathic Congress to the American Institute of Homœopathy, mentioned, are more or less imbued with the homœopathic ideas, and practice accordingly. I shall conclude this account of my short sketch of Homœopathy in Europe with the examination of the germ theory, the best exponent of which may at present be considered Professor Edwin Klebs, of Prague. His address on the subject was delivered on the fiftieth anniversary of the Society of German Naturalists and Physicians, at Munich, from which I will extract the most important statements.

The title of his essay is "Ueber die Ungestaltung der medicinischen Anschauungen in den letzten drei Jahrzehnten," (on the transformation of medical views during the last thirty years.)

According to Klebs the medical reform during these years chiefly regarded the consideration of the symptoms of diseases, whilst the real causes of these processes were not investigated.

He then alludes to Schelling's ideal views of disease, and Reil's confessions that we know nothing of the primary cause, and that pathology was, for the present, pure empiricism. He finally comes to Schoenlein, "who, more accurately than any other, delineated the single phenomena of disease, whilst Brown's stimulating theory, and Broussai's idea of the inflammation of the mucous tissue, seemed to extinguish the individual differences in the diseased manifestations."

The great merit of Schoenlein consists in having adopted the true principle of all natural science, by following the different phases of disease from their first beginning to the end, describing accurately their whole development.

He next comes to speak of Homœopathy, and makes a madly conceived attack upon it. He mentions the subject because there are many intelligent people who have faith in it. He, however, is of the opinion that it cannot claim to be acknowledged by physicians as a scientific method, being pure empiricism. With such views he denies, of course, the validity of the principle, *similia similibus*.

On the other hand he cannot comprehend how it still so generally prevails, and ascribes this circumstance to the defects of "Scientific Medicine." He finally comes to the conclusion, "*that this doctrine could not prevail if the old school of medicine were as successful in the practice of medicine as it is in the diagnosis of diseases and post-mortem examinations; for, he adds, it is not the least intelligent part of the community which adheres to it,*" (i. e., Homœopathy).*

The European and particularly the German medical world is at present deeply agitated by the theory of germs, and numerous investigations in this respect are the order of the day. We will give the main points of these investigations, and base our studies of this subject principally upon the address of Dr. Klebs.

He first speaks of pathology and of the men who have distinguished themselves in this branch of medical science. He acknowledges their strong advocacy of similar views to his own regarding the germ theory, but condemns their "one-sidedness." He alludes particularly to Henle, Reil, Schelling, Virchow, Helmholtz. These men consider diseases for the most part as an increase or decrease of the normal processes of life, whilst he maintains them to be an entirely different state, not at all analogous to any form existing in the normal condition. The specific infectious diseases, like tuberculosis, syphilis, plague, and typhus, show this in the most striking manner.

The mechanism of the human body has not to be changed, but the introduction of these foreign abnormal influences, producing the pathological process or action, has to be arrested.

At a later period Henle made experiments in relation to the *contagium animatum*, that individual life of these contagions, which he maintained could be augmented by assimilation with foreign substances, by the infectious action of the slightest quantity of this substance, whilst the whole diseased process has a certain typical course.

But these important revelations of Henle, as well as similar

* An old school professor, at one of the principal universities of Germany, acknowledged to me that the German nobility had the greatest confidence in the homœopathic practice.—C. H.

ones by the medical Geographer, Mühry, were disregarded for full thirty years.

"These views, however important," continues Klebs, "had not the slightest influence on the practice of physicians. They continued to cure symptomatically, or in most cases, "es eben gehen zu lassen, wie es Gott gefällt," i. e., in most cases leave the disease to nature as God wills.

Dr. Klebs acknowledges that pathological medicine is under great obligation to Schöenlein for his service in this respect, particularly for the development of histology, and the more refined pathological anatomy. The origin of these diseased states was, however, touched upon very slightly and generally in a very superficial, theoretical manner.

But we might say the same of Dr. Klebs, who ascribes all these pathological conditions to parasites. Does this view bring us any farther in the actual practice of medicine, in the cure of these parasites? Must he not always possess, for the annihilation of every particular kind of fungus, a supreme law for his guidance? For he himself confesses that the anatomical structure of these parasites, as well as their action on the human body, is entirely distinct for each kind.

In seeking the cause of numerous and important diseases in their parasitical nature, Dr. K. accuses his opponents of a fanatical opposition to new ideas, thereby showing always the weakness of the opponent. He may apply this maxim to himself in his opposition to the homœopathic doctrine and practice.

Dr. K. is convinced, from numerous experiments performed by him, that in all diseases which have been sufficiently investigated, the same organisms are always found. They must, therefore, be intimately related to the diseased process. That they are the cause of these diseases can be gathered from the circumstance, that the same organisms transplanted always produce the same disease. He alludes particularly to the "Milzbrand," *Anthrax malignus*, of animals, in which the blood of these animals infected by this disease contains a large quantity of small rods, which are pronounced organic products by some, and by others are mentioned as crystals. Every one was at liberty to believe one or the other, but when Davaine showed

that the transplantation of a very few little rods into a healthy animal was sufficient to produce the *Anthrax malignus*, "Milzbrand," and subsequently the death of the animal, after an immense multiplication of these little rods, it was hardly possible to doubt that these little rods consisted of organisms capable of being propagated. The argument in favor of this view was made still stronger when it was shown that the immediate extirpation of the part, where the inoculation took place, prevented the general infection of the animals.

Davaine was therefore perfectly justified in regarding them as a form of low specific organism, which, in order to distinguish them from others, he designated by the name of Bacteria, and considered them the true cause of the anthrax malignus.

These little rods were mixed with a fluid, which, after repeated experiments by inoculation, was found entirely inert.

This is verified by Professor Tiegel, Zahn, Helmholtz, and by the highly meritorious French naturalist, Pasteur.

What is true with regard to anthrax malignus is also true, according to Klebs and his pupil Dr. Soyker, with regard to other diseases. Thus in the organism of septic diseases from wounds was found the *mikrosporon septicum*; in pneumonia, in diseases of the kidneys and heart, and also those diseases generally called rheumatic, the *monadines* were found.

Chauveau showed this also with regard to cow-pox matter. There is therefore not the slightest doubt that in numerous diseases these organisms are the cause of the diseased action.

Dr. Klebs is convinced in his own mind that the time will arrive when the different species of these organisms will constitute the groundwork of the nosology of diseases.

Dr. Drysdale, of Liverpool, in his essay on "Germ Theories and Infectious Diseases," furnishes the following classification of the nature of infectious miasms:

1. PARASITIC GERMS.

a. MORPHOLOGICALLY SPECIFIC PARASITIC DISEASES.

Entozoa Diseases.
 Scabies.
 Tinea tonsurans.
 " circinata.
 " favosa.
 Trichinous Disease.
 Fungous foot.
 Exdemic Dysentery of Egypt and
 the Cape.
 Chylosuria and Elephantiasis, etc.

b. PHYSIOLOGICALLY SPECIFIC PARASITIC DISEASES.

Splenic Fever?
 Relapsing Fever?
 Pneumo-enteritis contagiosa?

2. PARTIAL BIONS OR GRAFT GERMS, ACTING BY { SIMPLE GRAFTING.
CONJUGATION.
REJUVENESCENCE.

ANIMAL.

Infective Catarrhs.
 " Blennorrhœas.
 " Ophthalmia.
 " Erysipelas.
 " Pneumonia.
 " Peritonitis.
 " Pyemia.

Puerperal Fever.
 Diphtheria, etc.
 Small-pox.
 Vaccine-pox.
 Measles.
 Scarlet Fever.
 Whooping-cough.
 Mumps.
 Typhus, etc.
 Typhoid.
 Cholera.
 Yellow Fever, etc.

VEGETABLE.

Secretions and Partial Bions.	
HEALTHY.	DISEASED.
<hr/>	
Pollen of the Grasses, causing Hay Fever.	Malaria, causing Intermittent and Remittent Fevers.

Also common putrid blood poisoning in the first genera- tion.	Rabies. Syphilis. Glanders. Malignant Sep- ticemia.
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The acute forms can be arranged according to the inflammatory character of their action on the infected organs, and in such as are not subject to such changes. The first are distinguished from the other by the circumstance, that the infection has taken place in consequence of a mechanical injury.

The other form includes particularly acute infectious and exanthematous diseases, comprising on the one hand the great order of typhoid and pestilential diseases, and on the other, variola, scarlatina, measles, and wherever diseases of the skin form a prominent feature.

The boundaries of these two diseases, as the exanthematous type shows, are not very clearly defined. Within the circle of these definitions there may be mentioned two certain and reliable observations, which can with great probability be attributed to the parasitic forms, namely: first, "Rockfall typhus," the relapsing typhus, with its clearly defined *epidid*, discovered by Obermayer, and second, small pox, in which Chauveau distinctly showed that the vaccinating power diminishes in the upper strata; in fact, is entirely obliterated, whilst the deeper strata have an augmentation of power. The constant presence in small pox of blastoporous fungi (*spallpores*) shows the parasitic nature of this disease.

The same law prevails with regard to pestilential typhoid and malarial diseases generally. In this connection, the study of the soil from which these diseases spring, is of the highest importance.

Professor Klebs, in speaking of diphtheria, alludes to the death of a distinguished professor at Prague, as well as the great mortality among children by this disease. It has been shown with the greatest accuracy that diphtheria is produced by a distinctly characterized form of fungus, the *actinomyces diphtheriæformis*. This fungus was seen and examined by Giessem Brown, of Edinburgh, in the laboratory of Dr. Klebs.

This *actinomyces diphtheriæformis* loses its power, if treated for a few hours by a solution of Benzoxide of Soda, and it is further shown that animals which have been saturated with this substance, as much as a thousandth part of the weight of their body, do not afford a proper soil for the growth of these fungi.

Dr. Klebs next speaks of rheumatic diseases, which, according to the popular notion, are ascribed to colds. He owes it to Professor Helmholtz, his teacher of general pathology, that from an early period of his life, he was never a follower of this ignorant, dogmatic pathology, which pretended to explain something by calling a disease a cold. Long continued experiments have taught him that even the most varied intensities of temperature will never be the cause of this disease, either in healthy animals or man. This fact is still more strongly corroborated by the North Pole explorers, Messrs. Payer, Laube, Nordenskiöld, whose united testimony speaks of the complete exemption of their men from rheumatic and catarrhal sufferings in these regions. With two of these explorers Dr. Klebs had a personal interview, and they affirm, that notwithstanding the most enormous changes of temperature, their men remained entirely free from these affections.

In rheumatism of the heart also, in inflammation of the valves, fissiparous fungi (*spaltpilze*), have been discovered, and these affections can be perpetuated involuntarily by transmission or transplantation on animals.

Finally it has been ascertained that those forms designated by Dr. Klebs as *monadines*, are only active as fungi; but the water in which they are found has no effect. In order to avoid any possible mistake, for years the valves of the heart of many dogs have been wounded. In no instance has the progressive character, so characteristic of the rheumatic affections of the heart, been observed. This latter state is always connected with the presence of parasites in the diseased tissue of the valves.

We come now finally to the important series of chronic infectious diseases, like tuberculosis, syphilis and lepra.

With regard to tuberculosis it was considered somewhat doubtful in Germany, whether this disease was really infectious.* Its identity with the tuberculosis of horned cattle, "Perlsucht der Rinder," as maintained by Professor Klebs,

* The infectious nature of this disease has been long ago evident to me, having frequently seen nurses of such persons attacked by it, when there was not the slightest hereditary taint.—c. n.

Gerlach and Bollinger made this view almost a certainty. Others however, like Cobinheim and Frankel, doubted the specific nature of the tubercular virus, as these investigators saw the same results produced by the inoculation of all kinds of bodies. Prof. Klebs negates this nonconcordance with his views to the imperfection of their investigations. All this applies with the same reason to leprosy. If, therefore, for acute diseases, a *contagium animatum* may be established, it may in the same way be proved for those of a chronic nature. If one is true the other cannot fail of being so; or again, both may be considered doubtful.

The anatomical evidence for these parasites in chronic diseases has not as yet been proved in the clearest manner. But the investigations continue with unabated vigor, and they cannot fail finally to be crowned with success. In the case of leprosy this has been more clearly defined. Professor Balzerkaps of Christiania, found in the exulcerated nodes of leprosy, without much difficulty, groups of Bacteria, which were entirely different in their anatomical structure from the Bacteria of other diseases. In the same way syphilitic belongs to these bacterial processes, their presence having been proved by repeated experiments.

These investigations are still progressing. There still remains the experimental scheme which Professor Klebs thinks he has furnished with regard to tuberculosis.

A guinea pig is inoculated with tuberculous matter, which is in the first stage of development. The smallest quantity of this is mixed with the albumen of an egg (a fluid absolutely protected from impurities). This perfectly clear liquid becomes after a time turbid, the microscope detecting numberless movable particles. On the other hand another vessel with the same liquid remains entirely unchanged; but, if we afterwards transport a small quantity of this fluid from the first vessel into the other, this latter also becomes troubled with the same movable particles. This can be continued *ad infinitum*.

With every new generation the particles of undeveloped substance, derived originally from the inoculated animal, become smaller and smaller and finally become extinct. The substance

on the other hand comprising within itself the character of the organisms to which it has been subjected, becomes in the same manner purer, and finally almost absolutely pure. If this substance, transferred to another animal, produces tuberculosis, it must undoubtedly be produced by the first inoculated animal, and be the cause of it.

From this short statement it is, according to Dr. Klebs, evident that for each of the larger series of infectious diseases, in one or several cases the undoubted parasitic nature of these processes cannot be put in question. We may, therefore, assert with a tolerable degree of probability, that also in the other cases analogous causes have produced similar results.

It would certainly be an unreasonable demand if we had to postpone the acceptance of these hypotheses to a time when even the slightest doubt regarding their origin was removed from our mind. On the contrary, it appears to Klebs that the authentication of these relations has produced the greatest changes in all our medical views, even if they are not everywhere prominently advocated and directly conceded, whilst in topical treatment of surgical cases there exists already, owing to the influence of the above views, the greatest unanimity of practice. This has not yet been accomplished with regard to the apprehension and treatment of internal complaints. Even when facts speak, as this is the case with the antiparasitic treatment of rheumatism, the majority of physicians nevertheless do not concede this as the leading view of their treatment.

Dr. Klebs also alludes to Dr. Jahn, physician of the military hospital at Stargard, where the success of this method of treatment by salicylic acid in typhoid fever is mentioned.

There were three epidemics of typhus in the military hospital. In the first there was only expectant treatment according to the old method, and the percentage of deaths was 23. In the second epidemic there was energetic cold water treatment, with 9 per cent. of deaths. In the third treatment by salicylic acid the percentage of deaths was 8. It will be seen that there was no homœopathic treatment, which certainly ought also to have had a place in this experimental hospital.

He admitted, however, that the favorable result is not suffi-

cient to establish the truth of the antiparasitic treatment. The most important part of this treatment was, that the patients whilst under the influence of salyollic acid remained entirely free from affections of the brain, and their appetite was uniminished.

The celebrated Helmholtz, who made an address at the same meeting of naturalists and physicians, admits with Klose, that it is a great advance, when distinct objects can take the place of mystical notions of diseases, not only for the sake of surgery, but medical science in general.

He finally comes to the consideration of the therapeutical principles, which ought to guide us in extinguishing these parasitical processes; and here it is confessed, that the success in the Trichina disease was not very brilliant, where only symptomatic treatment could be pursued. Professor Klose advises an experimental mode of treatment. As it is confessed that not only the anatomical structure of these fungi as well as their action on the human body, is entirely distinct, our homoeopathic law must undoubtedly come into play. By the faithful observance of this law we must be able to eradicate entirely these parasitical and pathological processes. But the similarity must not be merely symptomatic, but go deeper in the whole pathological process of the disease. For in a practice of 43 years I have come to the conclusion, that where this similarity of the symptoms of the remedy not only corresponded to the symptoms of the disease, but also to the pathological state, as far as this could be discovered, or in other words was a true *simillimum*, the curative effect of the remedies always exceeded my expectations.

If, therefore, the germ theory of disease would lead us nearer to the true nature of diseases, we ought to hail these investigations with delight, or still better, contribute our share to their elucidation by our own exertions and studies of these phenomena.
